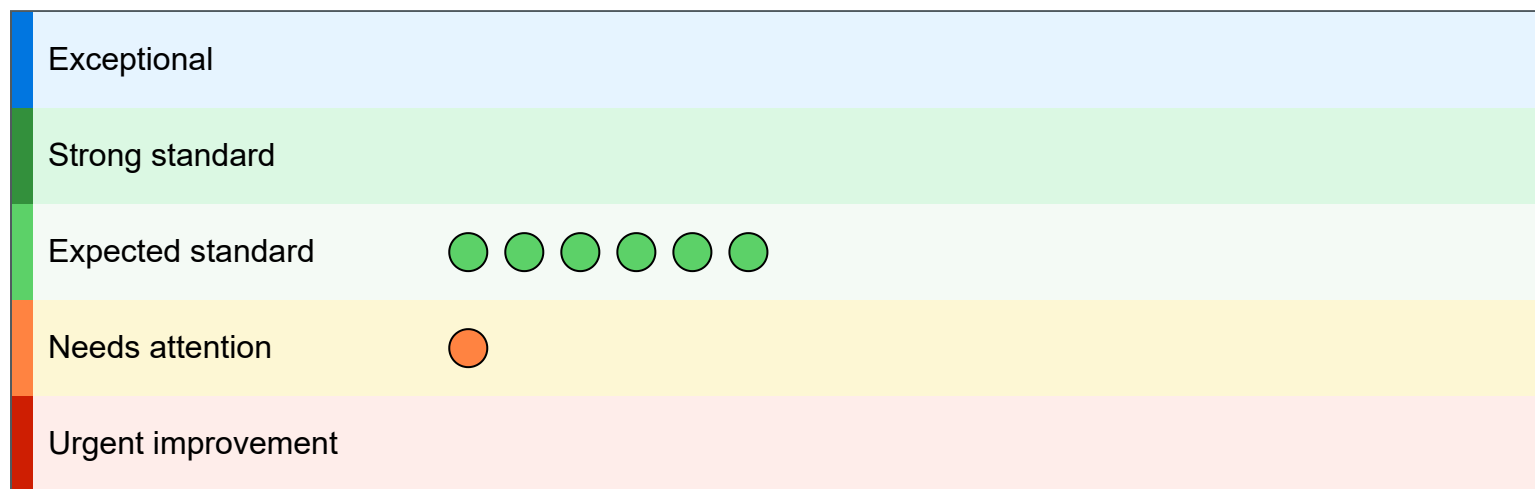


# Church of the Ascension CofE Primary School

Address: New Street, DY6 9AH

Unique reference number (URN): 148864

## Inspection report: 20 January 2026



### ✔ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

#### How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

## Expected standard

### Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics and make the necessary progress over time. This prepares them well for secondary school. Gaps in pupils' learning, including in early reading, writing and mathematics close more quickly as pupils move through the school. At times, pupils' learning in some classes and in a few subjects is uneven and not as secure as it should be.

By the end of Year 6, most pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, reach the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. Writing is a strength with more pupils than the national average attaining greater depth. Results in the Year 4 multiplication check are above national averages. Year 1 pupils attain well in the phonics screening check. Most children are well prepared for the transition to key stage 1 by the end of the Reception Year. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities typically progress well from their different starting points.

### Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Pupils' attendance is high. Leaders and staff place a strong focus on the importance of attending regularly. Their work is effective. The school reviews attendance data weekly. This ensures timely action. Staff identify pupils who need support quickly and work closely with families and external agencies to remove any barriers. Attendance is celebrated through assemblies, which motivates pupils and reinforces positive habits.

Staff promote respectful and positive relationships across the school. This helps create an orderly environment. Clear morning routines ensure that pupils enter school calmly and happily. In the playground, pupils generally play together well. They are kind and show empathy towards each other. In lessons, most pupils listen carefully and contribute enthusiastically during discussions. There are occasions when some staff provide too much help for pupils. This does not encourage pupils to be independent or resilient. Leaders are rightly working with staff to implement strategies to help pupils to take increased ownership of their learning. Pupils say that adults deal with issues quickly, which helps them feel safe and supported. School records show that bullying and discriminatory behaviour are not tolerated. Staff deal with any incidents promptly.

### Early years

Expected standard 

From the moment children arrive in early years, staff build effective partnerships with parents and carers so that together they can help children settle in quickly. Staff prioritise children's communication and language skills. They model language well and use purposeful questioning to develop and extend children's vocabulary successfully.

The curriculum prepares children well for learning in Year 1. It builds children's knowledge steadily across all areas in a clearly sequenced way. Staff typically consider gaps in children's learning when planning activities. This helps children build on what they already

know. There are occasions when some children are not moved on in their learning quickly enough. This prevents them from making even better progress in the different areas of learning.

Reading and writing are valued and promoted. Children enjoy practising their phonics and listening to and joining in with stories and rhymes. The school has correctly identified that some children do not hold pencils correctly or form letters and numbers accurately. Handwriting activities and practical tasks that help to strengthen children's hand muscles are supporting improvements in these areas.

## **Inclusion**

**Expected standard** 

Leaders have created a school where everyone feels included. Pupils feel valued and supported. Leaders place a strong emphasis on identifying pupils' needs early. They ensure that pupils receive the right support at the right time.

Staff work closely with parents and carers, as well as external agencies, to provide additional support to pupils who need it. Regular checks on pupils' learning and development help staff to identify needs promptly and put appropriate support in place. Leaders work well with the local authority to ensure that pupils who need it receive timely and effective support.

Staff receive useful training so that they can support pupils well. Staff provide pupils with appropriate equipment and resources so that they can engage fully in their learning. Further training is planned to enable staff to better adapt learning materials for some pupils. The school also provides the right emotional and practical support, including counselling when needed, to help pupils feel calm and ready to learn.

Additional funding is used carefully to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve well over time and to attend school regularly.

## **Leadership and governance**

**Expected standard** 

School leaders work closely with the trust. Together, they have accurately identified what the school does well and what needs to improve. They have taken clear action that has made safeguarding stronger, improved the support pupils receive and raised expectations for how pupils learn and behave.

The school, trustees and governors make decisions that put pupils first. Trustees and governors ensure statutory duties are met. They hold leaders appropriately to account, including through regular meetings.

Staff benefit from a coherent programme of professional learning that is closely linked to the school's priorities. This training is helping to strengthen teachers' subject knowledge and pedagogy. Training to enable leaders with responsibility for key areas to check how well their subjects are working is at an early stage. Consequently, not all leaders have a clear picture of how well pupils are learning across the curriculum.

Staff are positive about the school. They are proud to part of the Church of Ascension team. Staff appreciate leaders' consideration of their workload and wellbeing. They particularly value practical measures such as flexible working arrangements.

Most parents and carers are supportive of the school and the improvements they have seen. They commend the care and consideration shown towards their children and the approachability of leaders and staff.

## **Personal development and wellbeing**

**Expected standard** ●

Pupils are friendly and welcoming. They confidently start conversations with adults and each other. Pupils listen carefully and take turns so that no one feels left out. As they walk around school, pupils hold open doors and smile at each other.

The school's personal development programme helps pupils to develop the knowledge they need for the future. For example, they learn about fairness, democracy and the importance of having a voice. Pupils learn about and show respect for different cultures and beliefs. They have an age-appropriate awareness of healthy relationships and know what appropriate behaviour looks like. Pupils understand online safety and the risks linked to social media.

Pastoral support is effective. Well-trained staff and external agencies provide targeted support for pupils who need help to develop their social skills or are experiencing difficulties. This support helps pupils build friendships, manage their emotions and talk through personal challenges.

Pupils enjoy taking on leadership responsibilities and making a difference in their school through the school council and eco-committee, for example. The play leaders, fondly known as 'yellow bibs' by their peers, contribute to a positive lunchtime experience. Pupils also take an active role in their community. For example, they collect food for the local food bank and take part in the Wall Heath in Bloom project.

The school offers a wide range of sporting clubs and competitions. Leaders are exploring ways to broaden opportunities so pupils can further develop their talents and interests, including in the arts. Leaders track who takes part in clubs closely. They recognise that more could be done to increase the number of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who attend the clubs on offer.

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## **Needs attention** ●

### **Curriculum and teaching**

**Needs attention** ●

The curriculum is not delivered consistently well. At times, learning activities do not support pupils to retain and recall the most important knowledge. In some lessons, activities lack sufficient ambition for pupils who have already secured the intended learning. As a result, some pupils do not deepen their understanding of aspects of the curriculum sufficiently well.

The school has correctly identified these inconsistencies. It is taking appropriate action to improve practice. This includes refining the design of lessons and providing staff with support to strengthen their understanding of how pupils learn and remember knowledge over time. However, the curriculum is broad and balanced and is carefully planned in most subjects. There are clear strengths in areas such as art and design and writing, where pupils produce work of a progressively high quality.

Teachers typically demonstrate secure subject knowledge. They explain new learning clearly and address misconceptions promptly. Teachers generally adapt activities appropriately for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This enables these pupils to engage successfully with their learning.

The school has maintained its established daily handwriting practice and its strong focus on vocabulary, spelling and number work. It has introduced a new phonics programme. This helps pupils build secure foundations in reading, writing and mathematics. Reading is given high priority, with a clear structure that helps pupils become more fluent and confident.

## **What it's like to be a pupil at this school**

Church of the Ascension is a happy place where pupils enjoy learning. This joy of learning begins in the early years. Pupils of all ages feel that they belong because staff make sure that all pupils are valued and made to feel welcome. Where needed, pupils receive well-tailored support for their wellbeing. For example, practical resources such as calming kits and access to drawing and talking therapies effectively reduce any barriers to learning that pupils may face.

Pupils are appropriately prepared for the next stage of their education. They attain well in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 and in the main progress well through the wider curriculum. However, on occasion, differences in how well teachers deliver the curriculum mean that some pupils do not make the progress they should.

Relationships between pupils and staff are positive. During lessons, most pupils are attentive and keen to learn. Pupils typically interact respectfully with one another during break times. Incidents of bullying are infrequent and resolved quickly by staff. Pupils' attendance levels are high.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in different settings, including in the school's woodland area. They develop a secure understanding of rights and responsibilities through opportunities such as house captains and wellbeing leaders. These experiences support pupils' personal development well.

The school provides a growing range of activities that extend pupils' learning beyond the curriculum. These include music lessons where pupils can learn to play instruments such as the tuba and guitar. Pupils relish taking part in creative projects that give them the chance to showcase their artistic flair in the school art gallery. These opportunities help to develop their confidence and self-esteem.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is implemented consistently well across the school. They should support teachers to plan activities that help pupils remember the most important knowledge so that all pupils make strong progress through the curriculum.
  - Leaders should make sure that teaching provides appropriate ambition for pupils who have already secured the intended learning. They should support teachers to plan learning that enables these pupils, including children in the early years, to deepen their learning.
  - Leaders, with support from the trust, should ensure that teachers with subject responsibilities have a clear and accurate understanding of how well pupils are learning in their subjects so that they can support staff to improve consistency in teaching, curriculum implementation and pupils' learning.
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## About this inspection

This school is part of Elements Diocesan Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the interim chief executive officer, Vicki Shelley, and overseen by a board of directors, chaired by Barry Newton.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other leaders. The lead inspector met with representatives from the local school board. She also met with the interim chief executive officer, the chief school improvement officer and trustees. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the Diocese of Worcester.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school joined Elements Diocesan Learning Trust in 2022. The current headteacher started working at the school in September 2024. The chief education officer took up the interim role in January 2026.

The school does not use alternative provision.

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The last section 48 inspection took place in February 2025.

Headteacher: Lindsay Mason

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**Lead inspector:**

Usha Devi, His Majesty's Inspector

**Team inspectors:**

Edward Masterson, Ofsted Inspector

Heather Simpson, Ofsted Inspector

**Facts and figures used on inspection**

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 20 January 2026

**School and pupil context****Total pupils**

**312**

Close to average

**What does this mean?**

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

**School capacity**

**315**

Close to average

**What does this mean?**

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

**Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)**

**6.09%**

Well below average

### What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

### Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

**2.88%**

Close to average

### What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

### Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

**6.73%**

Well below average

### What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

### Location deprivation

**Well below average**

### What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

### Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

**No resourced provision**

## What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

## All pupils' performance

### Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		61%	
2024/25	73%	62%	Above
2023/24	62%	61%	Close to average
2022/23		60%	

### Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		74%	
2024/25	80%	75%	Close to average
2023/24	80%	74%	Close to average
2022/23		73%	

### Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		72%	
<b>2024/25</b>	75%	72%	Close to average
<b>2023/24</b>	78%	72%	Close to average
<b>2022/23</b>		71%	

## Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		73%	
<b>2024/25</b>	80%	74%	Close to average
<b>2023/24</b>	76%	73%	Close to average
<b>2022/23</b>		73%	

## Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

### Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		46%	
<b>2024/25</b>	S	47%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	S	46%	S
2022/23		44%	

### Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		62%	
2024/25	S	63%	S
2023/24	S	62%	S
2022/23		60%	

### Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		59%	
2024/25	S	59%	S
2023/24	S	58%	S
2022/23		58%	

### Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		60%	
<b>2024/25</b>	S	61%	S
<b>2023/24</b>	S	59%	S
<b>2022/23</b>		59%	

'S' in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

## Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

### Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		68%	
<b>2024/25</b>	S	69%	S
<b>2023/24</b>	S	67%	S
<b>2022/23</b>		66%	

### Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		80%	
<b>2024/25</b>	S	81%	S
<b>2023/24</b>	S	80%	S
<b>2022/23</b>		78%	

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		78%	
<b>2024/25</b>	S	78%	S
<b>2023/24</b>	S	78%	S
<b>2022/23</b>		77%	

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>		80%	
<b>2024/25</b>	S	81%	S
<b>2023/24</b>	S	79%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23		79%	

'S' in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

## Absence

### Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 terms)	3.7%	5.2%	Below
2023/24	5.2%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23	4.6%	5.9%	Below

### Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 terms)	5.8%	13.3%	Below
2023/24	12.3%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23	8.6%	16.2%	Below

# Our grades explained

## Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

## Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

## Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

## Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

## Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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